

Open Research Online

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

Organizing spaces: photography and the visual production of space-texts in organizational ethnography

Conference or Workshop Item

How to cite:

Lucas, Mike and Wright, Alex (2015). Organizing spaces: photography and the visual production of space-texts in organizational ethnography. In: APROS/EGOS Colloquium 2015 Sub-theme 12: Organizational Ethnography and the Challenge of Social Space, 9-11 Dec 2015, UTS Sydney, Australia.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© [not recorded]



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Version: Accepted Manuscript

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

oro.open.ac.uk

Mike Lucas, Open University Business School
mike.lucas@open.ac.uk.

Alex Wright, Open University Business School
alex.wright@open.ac.uk.

Sub-theme 12: Organizational Ethnography and the Challenge of Social Space

Organizing spaces: photography and the visual production of space-texts in organizational ethnography

This paper examines the use of ethnographic photography to investigate organizational space. We integrate insights from social anthropology and discourse theory on the practices of photography in ethnographic research; and, organizational theory and post-modern geography on the socially productive, relational nature of space. An approach to researching organizational/organizing space-texts that addresses the challenge of a theoretically informed visual methodology by positing ethnographic photography as integral to the both spatial practice and its theorization is advanced. Through this we challenge current approaches, much of which retain an empiricist/realist flavour in certifying the photographer as an ‘objective’ witness to spacing, or at best support an individualist aesthetic. We contribute to knowledge through an examination of the materiality and embodied experiences of space. Our use of intertextual theory positions the ethnographic photographer in a dialogic practice of spacing and the textual politics of authorship and authority.

Key words: Photography, ethnography, text, space

Introduction

There is growing evidence of the use of photography in organizational research (e.g. Bell and Davison, 2013; Cochoy, 2009; Decker, 2014; Ray and Smith, 2012; Swan, 2010). In part this may be attributed to the expanding ubiquity of the camera and the capacity of the photograph to indicate presence (Barthes, 1982). Photographs may be used as a form of certification that a researcher was indeed there (wherever there is?) at the time when certain events occurred and particular phenomena could be observed. However, according to Bell and Davison (2013), photography has become associated with realist or naïve empiricist approaches to social research in which “image data is not interpreted, but presented as a window on the truth” (Pink, 2001 in Bell and Davison, 2013 p.8). Therefore, our motivation in writing this paper is to articulate a critical rendering of photography and the use of photography in organizational research that resists the pull of empiricism.

This paper draws insights on the use of photography in researching space in organizational ethnography and is rooted in long-established, historical connections in the development of anthropology and photography (Pinney, 2011). Such research is needed because there exists a lingering, realist “myth of transparency” (Bell and Davison, 2012 , p.2) in the use of photographs, which many contemporary ethnographers, even those with more critical outlooks, find difficult to break out of. This is problematic as this pervading realism has impacted on the recent photographic treatments of space in organizational ethnography presenting as ‘evidence’ of an objective reality witnessed by the photographer. This objectification of space, the photograph and the photographer is theoretically limiting and we respond to this by arguing for a theory-led approach to space that enables ethnographers to challenge such epistemological assumptions.

Our interest in space draws on Lefebvre’s (1991) radical reworking of space as both an outcome of and process of social production, and subsequent developments in organization studies (e.g. Beyes and Steyaert, 2012; Dobers and Stannegård, 2004; Knox, O’Doherty, Vurdubakis and Westrup, 2008) and in critical geography (e.g. Massey, 2008) that allow us to focus on processual, embodied and unconscious aspects of space. Drawing on Ricoeur’s (1971) model of meaningful action as text, and on an understanding of texts as dialogic (Bakhtin, 1981), discursively productive practices (Barthes, 1977; Kristeva, 1980), we argue that space and its production are fundamentally intertextual accomplishments. Our contribution extends existing understanding through using two key concepts from intertextual theory – the paratext (Genette, 1997) and the genotext (Kristeva, 1980) – which we draw

from to examine the role of photography as part of an ethnographic research project on the work of spatial meaning-making. Such an approach converges on a number of shared concerns: the significance of symbolic and performative forms of communication (e.g. *Author*); embodied organizing (e.g. Pullen & Rhodes, 2014); the agency of non-human material elements (e.g. Dale, 2005); and the exercise of power in authoring and authorship (e.g. Knights, 2006).

We begin this examination with a review of photography and the photograph which leads us to a consideration of Lefebvre's (1991) conceptualization of the production of space. We then focus on space and intertextuality where the notions of paratext (Genette, 1997) and genotext (Kristeva, 1980) are discussed. This raises threefold questions around the intertextual nature of space: first, what role do ethnographic photographs play in the consumption/production of a space-text? Next, to what extent is the photographic researcher a conscious authorial voice in the production of the space-text? And last, how might the role of the unconscious in spatial production be surfaced through photographic practice?

Photography and the photograph

Social anthropologist, Christopher Pinney (2011) argues that the modern disciplines of photography and anthropology (along with its sub-discipline, ethnography) have a shared history. They can trace their beginnings to the same period in the early nineteenth century – the establishment of the Aborigine's Protection Society, anthropology's earliest funding body in 1837, and the production of the first Daguerrotype photographs in 1839. In charting this “doubled history,” Pinney (2011 p.17) notes the linguistic limitations of the early exponents of anthropology as a key factor in the establishment of photography as a “vital tool in the transmission of...what was thought to be reliable data” (p.15). Although the naïve realism which pervaded much of nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropological photography was eventually superseded by developments in cultural anthropology (Bateson and Mead, 1942), critical theory (Benjamin, 1999) and semiotics (Barthes. 1982), there is still a prevailing view in much ethnographic work that photographs contain evidential traces of some real event or phenomenon. In Benjamin's (1999) view they are “seared with reality” (Pinney 2011, p.89) suggesting an ability to capture and convey indisputable facts. Susan Sontag (1979) notes their indexical qualities act as “a trace, something stencilled off the real; like a footprint or a death mask...material vestiges of their subject” (p.154). For Barthes (1982) a photograph is an “absolute Particular” (p.4), indistinguishable from the event to

which it refers, a signifier of what has occurred, and by extension, what has been witnessed by the photographer.

This apparent realism, even in the work of writers associated with critical and interpretive philosophies (e.g. Becker, 1974; Harper, 1994), lead Bell and Davison (2013) to assert a ‘myth of transparency’ has arisen that belies a “realist epistemology which assumes that images capture something that is observable and real” (p.2). In her consideration of discourse in visual methodologies, Rose (2012) acknowledges “the ‘realism’ of the photographic image [as] produced, not by photographic technology, but by the use of photographs in a specific regime of truth” (p.193). She sees photography as part of the construction of a discourse, “a particular knowledge about the world which shapes how the world is understood and how things are done in it” (p.190). This in turn poses two fundamental problems underpinning what Pinney (2011) considers the ‘troubling’ nature of photography. The first of these relates to the excessive visibility of photographs as a document of a particular event – their “tendency to solidify presences and claims” which produces a “heightened assertion and presence” (Pinney, 2011, p.80). Photographs appear to strengthen discursive claims to truth by overemphasising what is present and negating and marginalizing what is absent, sometimes in a conscious ‘pro-filmic’ enactment or framing of events (Pinney, 2011), and sometimes in the surfacing of an unconscious response (Benjamin, 1999). The second problem relates to Barthes’ notion of the “double temporality” of photographs - their combining of the “‘there-then’ of the making of the photograph with the ‘here-now’ of our viewing” (Pinney, 2011, p.85), and their subsequent reinterpretation and refolding into an intertextual discourse in which the photographer and viewer are co-authors. Both these problematics indicate the potentially powerful influence of photography on discourse construction and highlight the need for its more rounded consideration.

Douglas Harper (2003) argued that much of the pioneering documentary visual studies undertaken by ethnographers from the 1960s to the present (see Becker, 2002), retained an element of naïve realism while at the same time promoting discourses of social justice. Contemporary visual ethnography, he argues, has shifted its emphasis to recognise “the polysemic quality of the image – its multiple meanings and interpretations” in order to “create a dialogue around the competing and complementary meanings of the images” (Harper, 2003, p. 244). He advocates use of a specific technique – photo-elicitation - which “exploits the polysemic character” (2003, p.245) of the photographic image. Many

researchers have adopted this approach to generate further verbal evidence in an elicitation exercise, and to provide subjects with a sense of shared participation in the research (e.g. Warren 2002), or indeed to facilitate a research-informed approach to organizational development and change (e.g. Buchanan, 2001). Harper (2003) however also supports historical, autobiographical and reflective approaches to the process that appear to make use of Barthes' (1982) concept of the double-temporality of the photograph.

In the field of organizational and management research, two recent reviews of photographic methods (Ray and Smith, 2012) and visual management methodologies (Bell and Davison, 2013), together offer a comprehensive outline of the uses of photography in context. The approaches to photographic organizational research documented by Ray and Smith (2012) are centred on how certain photographic practices can be used in conjunction with particular theoretical approaches to generate evidence of, with and by research subjects. They identify three major philosophical approaches – realist, critical and interpretive – and four aspects of photographic practice – production, elicitation, analysis and ethical considerations – to analyse the use of photographs. Bell and Davison (2013), in their drive away from realist-empiricist approaches, argue for a strong theoretically-informed visual organizational research. They offer a more subtly delineated series of approaches from Foucauldian power/discourse analysis, through semiotics and intertextuality, aesthetics, rhetoric and ethical philosophy. Their (2013) conclusion that theory encourages a more reflexive orientation to visual data and its collection is built upon in this present research.

In contemporary organizational ethnography, the consideration of photographs may also offer, in conjunction with textual narratives of self-reflexion, a vivid sense of the contingent as well as the affective elements of a study. They may aid in the construction of what Van Maanen (1988) referred as the 'impressionist tale' – "a representational means of cracking open the culture and the fieldworker's way of knowing it so that both can be jointly examined" (p.102). From an auto-ethnographic perspective, *author* considered that photographs help to illustrate the "fractured, fleeting, illusory glimpses we catch of ourselves and our feelings during the course of our physical and intellectual endeavours, alongside the events and phenomena we wish to examine". This use of photographic images as reflexive prompts, echoes Barthes' (1977, 1982) later works that provide both testimony of what-has-been and autobiographical references in their attempts to examine the sources of their own interpretation. Gannon, in her account of post-structuralist approaches to what she termed

self-writing, argues that the production of such accounts allows an embodied knowledge which is “unreliable, fragmented and (temporally) dispersed” (2006, p.481) to be accessed, (re)constructed and ultimately performed.

The production of space

The argument that space is socially produced draws primarily from the work of Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre’s (1991, pp. 11-12) concern was with “the space of social practice, the space occupied by sensory phenomena, including products of the imagination such as projects and projections, symbols and utopias”. What emerged from his theorizing was a conceptual ‘triad’ (1991, p. 33), through which he sought to establish space as both an outcome and a process of social production. The triad explained space as: spatial practice (giving rise to perceived space), representations of space (conceived space) and representational spaces (lived space). Lefebvre (1991, p. 38) specifically notes society and space to be in a relationship of dialectical interaction. This suggests an inseparable entwinement whereby society and space co-constitute each other, the one being insignificant without the other. Lefebvre’s (1991) advocacy for this dynamic, dialectical view of space is essentially rooted in his belief that the production of space begins with the production of the body. His view was that “each living body *is* space and *has* its space: it produces itself in space and it also produces that space. This is a truly remarkable relationship: the body with its energies at its disposal, the living body, creates or produces its own space” (1991, p. 170).

From Lefebvre’s (2009, p. 229) assertion that “understanding of space...must begin with the lived and the body, that is, from a space occupied by an organic, living, and thinking being”, Beyes and Steyaert (2012, pp. 50-51) developed the idea of spacing as a “processual performing” of everyday space. This allows, they argue, for both “embodied apprehensions” of space at the individual level, and “different enactments of organizational geographies” to be brought together in what they term ‘polyrhythmic’ processes of spatial organizing. This concept of spacing is grounded in their interest in non-representational theorizing developed by cultural geographers (Anderson and Harrison, 2010; Cadman, 2009; Lorimer, 2005; Thrift 2007) and allows us to ascertain the main features of an individual performing of space: “first, everyday practice and materiality; second, embodiment and the body; third, affect and sensation; and fourth, multiplicity and minor politics” (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012, p. 51). From this we see how an actor, practicing photography for example, may contribute to broader social production processes. The materiality of the camera and the photographic image, the

movements and actions of the photographer; their emotional and sensory engagement with the subject of their photographic gaze are both produced by and productive of space. What we perhaps do not perceive are the political processes of photography, involving the framing, contextualization, display and re/viewing of the photographs. These connect photographers to others who conspire with them, consciously or otherwise, in the production of a meaningful space.

Space and intertextuality

The notion that space can be symbolically organized and read as a form of text is linked in part to Ricoeur's (1971) use of the text paradigm to understand broader social practices of meaning-making. In organization studies, Yanow's (1998) examination of museums as organizational spaces is an example of the treatment of organizational buildings and built spaces as 'texts' (p.217). Here she builds on Ricoeur's hermeneutic tradition, which views human artifacts and activities as texts whose meanings can be analysed using tools developed by literary theorists and critics. A key facet of this is the relationship between a text's author(s) and its reader(s), as to how meaning is constructed, conveyed or mediated. In the built environment, Yanow (1998) considers the architects and designers of museums to be authors of special texts. She examines how the intended meanings of the original authors conflict with those experiencing them – staff, managers, executives – who operate and thus re-interpret the designed space in negotiating their everyday lives. Intriguingly, while Yanow hints at the importance of visual elements in the authorship and construction of space-texts, by including site map diagrams in her research account she does not include photographs. This is addressed in her more recent work however (Yanow, 2012).

Lazar (2015), in her recent analysis of street protest movements in South America, offers a much broader view of cultural phenomena as texts. She draws on the views of art historian Frank Vigneron (2010) that a 'text' can be "any kind of cultural product" (2010, p. 41 in Lazar, 2015, p. 244), and that all texts are "intertwined with the assimilation and transformation of other texts...informed by other texts which the readers or viewers have read or seen, and by their own cultural context." (2010, p. 41 in Lazar, 2015, p. 244). She uses the concept of intertextuality as the "relational orientation of a text to other texts" (Bauman, 2004, p. 4) to argue that the organization of contemporary mass protest events, and in particular their visual and spatial organization, indicates practices of both collective authorial borrowing across space and the referencing of prior, historical protest events. For

example, the consistent logo-images and tent placements of 2011's Occupy protests illustrate for Lazar a collective textual interpenetration. Whereas the symbolism of the lone figure in Tiananmen Square, Beijing in 1989 referenced in the Tahrir Square protest in Egypt in January 2011 indicates an awareness of prior historical texts. Lazar states that "intertextuality is not necessarily only visual or symbolic but may be extended to other understandings of physical action; protests are indeed, intensely physical and sensual experiences, mobilising bodies and their senses in space" (2015, p. 244). This relational form of intertextuality is rooted in Bakhtin's (1981) concept of dialogics, with its focus on both the circulation of discursive utterances through society and across time and the practices of communicative action. In Bauman's (2004) view this allows us to identify a key dialectical tension in the use of intertextual theory for ethnographic research, namely between closed, authoritative, monologic and open, collaborative, dialogic approaches to text authorship.

This concern with authorship is taken up by Schmitt (2012, p. 17) in his examination of the textual production of "biophysical landscapes". He argues that spaces in the biophysical environment are assigned meanings by human actors loaded with symbolic significance; space then becomes "a readable object with connotative meaning and association" (2012, p. 17). He asserts that, "non-authored objects in our biophysical environments – such as wilderness, mountains, shoreline and other places – become coded with meanings through intertextual relationships" (2012, p.19). This concept of a non-authored object/text built out of layers of intertextual relationships draws on the works of Kristeva (1980), Foucault (1980) and Barthes (1977). Borrowing from Kristeva's general argument for intertextuality that "any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (1980, p.66), Schmitt (2011, p. 19) asserts that "any identifiable text is in fact an unstable node within a constantly shifting and evolving web of references, appropriations, influences and socio-cultural contexts". Invoking Foucault's concept of the "author-function" as merely a "contextual constraint...guiding any potential reader's interpretation of a text" (2011, p.23), and Barthes' notion that "the text is meaning at the act of consumption – an instance of collaboration between object, intertextual context (including author) and reader" (2011, p.24), Schmitt argues that biophysical environments are non-authored texts produced by "reader engagement with intertextuality" (2011, p.24).

The proposition of the removal or 'death' of the author, which underpinned the intellectual project of intertextual theory undertaken by Kristeva and Barthes in the late 1960s/early

1970s, poses a very significant challenge for the field of ethnography with its reliance on textual narrative. However Genette's (1997) concept of the paratext offers an understanding of how authored elements of a text can facilitate the involvement of other readers/co-contributors through its framing of how a text is intended to be read. The conventional view of the paratext sees its main purpose as "to ensure for the text a destiny which is consistent with the author's purpose" (Genette, 1997, p. 407), in other words to make the author's original intention and meaning clear to readers. Allen's slightly different interpretation of the paratext offers it as marking "those elements which lie on the threshold of the text and which help to direct and control the reception of a text by its readers" (2000, p. 100), which rebalances the production/consumption relationship establishing the paratext as a dialogic device.

In literary practice, paratexts are things such as the prefaces, footnotes, the book cover, the publisher's blurb, which are located on the margins (or thresholds) of the reader's experience. Curiously, Genette remains consistently ambiguous about what is and is not a paratext, preferring to characterize it as a zone of transition (between text and non-text) and of transaction. While not his original intention perhaps this serves to highlight the relational function of the text. Gray (2010) used the concept of paratext to examine the use of promotional flyers and posters for film and theatre performances, through which readers make sense of their content or symbolism. Schmitt's (2011) incorporation of maps, information booklets, guide books or photographs of an area of natural wilderness as paratexts enable the new consumer/producer of the space-text to begin to assign meanings based on their consumption of these marginal paratexts. We argue that the paratext is a useful concept in the context of ethnographic writing. Ethnographers make a conscious claim to authorship in their work because they wish to introduce a new readership to their involvement in the broader intertextual production that is the focus of their practice. However, such a claim may also attempt, as we do here, to emphasize that theirs is only one of many individual, intersubjective contributions to the collaborative weaving of the intertextual fabric as a whole.

The final element in our conceptualisation of space as intertextual comes from Kristeva's (1980) development of the concept of genotext, which she asserts is the non-linguistic precursor to all texts. Allen views the development of genotext, and its counterpart the phenotext, as Kristeva's way of articulating "the tension between a socialized, symbolic

discourse (the phenotext) and an unassimilable, anti-rational and anti-social semiotic language of instinctual and sexual drives (the genotext)” (2000, 48). Here we see recognition of the role that the unconscious plays in the creation of texts. We have already noted this interest in subconscious drives borne out in both spatial theory (Massey, 2005) and photographic theory (Benjamin, 1999), and this prompts us to ponder both their role in the intertextual production of space and the genotextual role of an individual act of photography.

Photographs of spaces of organization

It is surprising then that, given the connections we have discussed in this paper, there have been relatively few organizational ethnographies of space which have explicitly used photography as part of their methodology. Here, we consider two notable studies – Warren’s (2002) study of workplace aesthetics regarded as seminal in the development of photographic methods for organizational research; and Munro and Jordan’s (2013) recent examination of a city space – in which photography has been used.

Warren’s (2002) study of the workplace using photo-elicitation methods has, since its publication, influenced a significant strand of research using photographic methods to examine the aesthetics of organization. It also contains probably the most detailed consideration of what we may now identify in Lefebvre’s (1991) terms as spatial practice – individual adaptation within a dominant re-presentation of space by an employing organization. The three months study aimed to capture the emotional responses to an office move by members of a web-site design department of a global IT company (Warren, 2002), using a mixture of participants’ and Warren’s own photographs. Echoing Dale and Burrell, she establishes a key tenet of the study as being individual employee responses to the aesthetic stimuli provided by “the hermetically controlled and ergonomically designed workplaces we physically inhabit, to the logos and symbols of corporate identity and the ‘branding’ of corporate architecture.” (2008, p. 226). It is the “inherently embodied practice” (Warren, 2002, p. 227) of organizing by these individual employees, prompted by their enforced change of working environment, which the study then seeks to capture using a combination of participant involvement – “handing the camera to the respondents as a means of capturing this data”(2002, p. 232) - and photo-elicitation. What emerges is a group of individuals responding in a variety of ways to the reinforced spatial dominance of the employer: some fleeing to the rural outdoor surroundings to capture their feelings of order, structure, oppression and control enforced by the office space itself; others drawing on

symbols of community such as the placement of shared snacks in their improvisational colonisation of the new space; while still others seek refuge in their creative visual abstraction of the space.

There is much to admire in the photographic practices within this research study, particularly Warren's commitment to a model of collaborative co-production with her respondents moving the study beyond simple photo-elicitation (Wagner, 1979). Similarly, her subtle articulation of the production of a representative "image-text", hints at the study's potentially performative impact. The photographs used provide a sense of the emotional and sensory impact of a change of physical environment on individuals and their subjectivities. However the re-designed office is presented as a piece of planned space that enforces the organization's view of a creative environment to be experienced by actors. From a Lefebvrian perspective, the study appears limited by its lack of consideration of the ways in which practical, conversational and textual interaction contribute to the shaping or production of the space as a 'lived' environment. However, the most intriguing feature is that the involvement of the respondents in taking photographs prompted such practical and conversational acts, and, as such, may have contributed in a constitutive sense to the intertextual production of the space itself.

The question the reader may ask of the study is; 'what is the relationship between the acts of photography – both the taking and re-viewing of photographs – and the acts of spacing they are used to represent?' We are left feeling that the theoretical framing of the study offers insights into actors' responses to the spatial dominance of organizations, involving the importance of embodiment and the use of non-human materials by the individual participants. However, this is only a partial answer which contains limited detail of the inter-relational or political elements of spatial production. Crucially from our perspective it also does not consider the area of intertextuality and authorship from either a spatial or a photographic perspective.

Munro and Jordan's (2013) study examines the tactics of spatial appropriation by street performers during the Edinburgh Festival of 2010. This is a fascinating account based on a strong conceptual framework drawing largely on the work of de Certeau (1984), and Deleuze and Guattari (1988). The aim of their study is to develop "understanding of the sociality of organizational space, showing the way in which space is created through spatial tactics, rather

than simply being an epiphenomenon of architecture or designed spaces” (Munro and Jordan, 2013, p.1499). The street performers are characterised as the instigators of organizing processes whereby the unregulated “smooth space” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988) of the Edinburgh streets are occupied and temporarily appropriated using “spatial tactics” (De Certeau, 1984) to establish hybrid performance workspaces. These tactics include the establishment of the performance space (the ‘pitch’) in conjunction with Festival and City regulatory processes, the improvisation of physical boundaries (the ‘edge’) between performance and audience areas, and the incorporation of material props and audience activity into the performance. They suggest that space in this context is enacted in the embodied practices of the creative artists, a view which aligns with Lefebvre’s (1991) notion of representational space. There are also parallels here with the work of Beyes and Steyaert (2012), who identified the importance of micro-politics in the tactics of everyday practice. However, an examination of the photographs used in the article highlights the limits of their analysis.

As Munro and Jordan (2013) freely acknowledge, with clear comparative referencing to Warren (2002), their use of photographs is as “an *aide memoir* and as a form of visual field note in support of the ethnography rather than as the primary object of analysis” (Munro and Jordan, 2013, p.1501). Only three are used in the article, all of individual performers working in their temporarily ‘appropriated’ space. Our re-analysis of the photographs suggests they are as much about the temporary adaptation of planned architectural city space to the organizational needs of a fringe festival, as they are about tactical appropriation by an individual performer. There are three aspects to this argument that we elaborate.

First, the interview data reveal something of the discourse of street performance in a liberal capitalist economy in which tropes of creativity, empowerment and ownership are foregrounded; while the realities of low incomes, itinerant status, and the physical and psychological vulnerabilities of the self-employed street performer are buried beneath the surface. The emotional/aesthetic impacts of these conflicting tensions, and the way they impact on the spatial practices of the performers cannot be captured in these illustrative representations of festival performance spaces. Second, in such an extensively planned, materially realised, regulated and deeply socialised representative space as a city, we argue that temporary ‘ownership’ of a space by an individual is a rhetorical outcome, rooted in neoliberal discourse, whereas an actor’s contribution to the annual production of Edinburgh

city centre as a festival space has a performative value. It would seem from the photographs and the interview data that the city's materiality plays a neglected role in conjunction with the human actors in spatial production. This relates to the third aspect of our argument, which is again evidenced in the account. The macro-political processes by which the city is organized and managed as an annual festival space, involving local government institutions, festival organizing bodies and commercial interests, clearly impact on the micro-politics of street performance spaces through the daily 'pitch' allocation process.

The question then we should ask of the article by Munro and Jordan (2013) is 'what is the role of photography in this study?' Despite the theoretical premise of the study, which offers an interesting critical perspective on temporary organizational arrangements, the photographs themselves conform fairly openly to a realist model of evidence display. As representations of street performance during the 2010 Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the photographs in the article are used in a limited and limiting fashion. Yet when photography is used in the researching of space, we have to ask what impact the acts of photography, and the selection of photographs for an article (as well as those that were not selected!) have on our understanding of the phenomenon, and consequently on the phenomenon itself. The assumption of Munro and Jordan (2013) is that space is not socially produced, but appropriated and enacted individually and distributed socially. Hence we might conclude that the researchers have not considered in any detail their own potential influence on the production of the space and its meaning for others.

The use of photography in these two studies has allowed the researchers to explore differing aspects of individual spatial practice. Warren's (2002) examination of the aesthetic responses of employees to a change in their spatial working arrangements is aided by a thoughtfully aligned approach to photography, involving participants in a co-authored visual narrative. This does suggest awareness of dialogic approaches to the production of the research text. It stops short however of exploring how the practices of the photographers may themselves be part of a broader social production of space. Hence the (textual) authority of the employing organization in orchestrating spatial production is separated from the authorship of the research narrative which focuses on the adaptive responses of the employees. Munro and Jordan (2013) focus on the tactical agency of the individual in their temporary appropriation of space. The contribution that each performer makes to the annual production of a social spaces of 'festival' (and 'fringe') within the existing architecture and materials of the city of

Edinburgh is not considered here. Their illustrative use of photographs implies a separation researcher from subject which clearly maintains both authorship and authority with the former. In the next section we consider, using data from an ethnographic study by one of the authors, how photography may be treated as part of both the research text and the spatial text.

Photography as productive of organizational spaces

Concern over photography and the representation of space has been a significant facet of the research of one of the authors over recent years. His ethnographic study, incorporating photographs, of a Swedish folk-culture festival is concerned with the ways in which organizing unfolds and is practiced by a community in a relatively unstructured rural setting. Many of these photographs, taken over a five year period documented the ways in which a particular community produces an organizing space in their village setting. A selection of photographs were used as part of a reflexive, auto-ethnographic account by *Author* of his own involvement in the village's voluntary, festival-organizing activities. We draw on a number of photographs taken of the festival to illustrate our theoretical considerations.

To begin, it is worth pointing out that although the instigation of a photographic strand to the ethnography was a method-led decision, the study overall was influenced by the theoretical work of Tsoukas and Chia (2002), and the fieldwork of Buchanan (2001), and Harper (2003) as we realised that photography may help in understanding the complexity and temporal fluidity of processual change. In this context we consider the photographs of “direct relevance to the process- and practice-oriented theories ... centrally concerned with capturing the complexity associated with organizational activities as they continually unfold.” (Bell and Davison, 2012, p.13) They indicate some of the ways in which spatial production is bound inextricably to processes of organizing over time, at both an individual and a socio-cultural level, even when pre-planned representations of space such as buildings and streets appear only minimally present. Indeed, we would further suggest that, in the context of this annual event in its rural setting, the use of photography reveals the intertwined processes of organizing and spatial production more vividly than in many more formal organizational settings, laying bare the integral nature of “spacing” (Beyes and Steyaert, 2012) with its attendant materialities, embodiments, affectivities, and minor politics, to the practices of organizing.

Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 below present the site of a village festival celebration and some of the work of volunteer members of the community on improving site access and drainage. Figure 1 was taken at the opening of the festival in 2010; Figure 2 was taken on the first day of the 2013 festival. The initial intention with figure 1 was to capture a *representation* of the space (Lefebvre, 1991) and how the community volunteer group laid it out to effect the delivery of their festival contribution. Their choice of location, adjacent to the low wooden building – referred to by community members as the ‘fishing cottage’, as it was occasionally rented as an overnight sleeping base by visiting anglers – is in some ways obvious (open, and relatively accessible for stall-holders’ vehicles, and easy for layout planning and construction). Though all the land around the village, including this site, is technically owned by a large forestry company it is managed within broader local and national government regulatory frameworks which maintain ‘rights to roam’, and local government planning authority. Hence, the site is viewed by the villagers as ‘common’ land which can be improved within light regulatory constraints.



Figure 1 Festival site from access track 2010

With each annual iteration of the festival’s organization, it seemed that an increasing proportion of planning time and activity was spent on the preparation and upgrading of the site. We can see from Figure 1, the wet conditions which caused difficulties for the stall-

holders in setting up their stalls (the distance between them seems odd) and in driving into and out of the space. In Figure 2, three years later we observe that the village group has gravelled the access track, widened it by clearing some of the lying boulders alongside and provided a hard standing area (middle right, behind the pink flowers) for some of the heavier vehicles. Figure 3, in which two members of the organizing group are observed felling a small tree to create alternative site access, and Figure 4, where the partial completion of a new, gravelled access track and hard-standing area are observed, offer some insight into the process of improvement to the site. All this may seem rather mundane but these photographs indicate some of the spatial practices (Lefebvre, 1991) involved in production, suggesting the ways in which they are embodied in the work of the organizing group and how the acts of spacing incorporate material changes (Beyes and Steyaert, 2012).



Figure 2 Festival site from access track, July 2013

By observing the photographs of the changing face of the site, and the activities involved in its spatial production more closely, we begin to see some of the symbolic value of the space in its representational form (Lefebvre, 1991). This space is set aside for the performance of the festival, protected from visitors' vehicles. It is a short distance from a road, inviting/requiring visitors to abandon their vehicles and walk down the short track to the festival site. Figure 1 invites the viewer to shelter from the weather under the large awning - which incidentally houses a refreshment bar - but still to enjoy the benefits of the fresh air,

away from stale cars and houses. The festival is a celebration of the forest area in which it happens. Several of the villages, hamlets and homesteads spread around the vast 10,000 sq. km tract of forest want their visitors to enjoy the forest's mellow, natural beauty, mingle with their non-human as well as human neighbours and produce their own 'festive' space.



Figure 3 Clearing a tree from the site perimeter, April 2011

The space presented in these photographs then may be interpreted not just as a socially constructed backdrop for human organizing, but as an integral part of organizing. Human and non-human elements interact in an ongoing (in this case identifiably iterative) relational process of spatial production. At the same time we argue that this is part of an intertextual process (Kristeva, 1980) by which each member of the organizing group is able to contribute their own meaningful actions and interactions with each other and with the material, non-human constituents of space. Unlike Schmitt's (2011) interviewees who are wilderness visitors, contributing to a non-authored text through their consumption and reconstitution of a wide variety of source texts, the festival organizing group in their actions and interactions, are simultaneously claiming a collaborative authorial contribution to the new spatial text of the festival site and acknowledging the dialogue they are striking up with their festival visitors. This is a complex process which draws on the non-authored texts of their forest

surroundings, expresses their bodily engagement, both conscious and potentially unconscious, and also involves them in the ‘minor’ politics (Beyes and Steyaert, 2012) of organizing. We argue here that it also illustrates one of the key dialectical tensions (Bauman, 2004) inherent in intertextuality between closed authorship and open dialogue.



Figure 4 Site access track being relayed, June 2013

The invocation of politics and authorship is an appropriate point on which to consider the photographs themselves (as opposed to what they claim to represent) and the role of the ethnographer-as-photographic-practitioner in what we are claiming is a piece of intertextual production. There are three problems we must grapple with to resolve this issue. First, the ethnographic researcher is often faced with the dilemma of faithfully representing the authentic, while at the same time imposing an authoritative interpretation of events. Second, as examined earlier, we are extremely wary of the trap of making truth-knowledge claims on the basis of naïve-realist forms of empirical evidence. Third, the field research presented here is based on an aspect of one of the authors’ life experience which is ongoing (see *Author*) and

still involves him in the work and lives of the festival organizing group. Hence, the photographs have been subject to regular review and retrospection as part of his own personal reflections, as well as our discussions over this paper.

In addressing these problems, we argue that the ethnographer's account of the events or phenomena they observe and experience act as a paratext (Genette, 1997) in the intertextual production of the space in which they occur. They act as a formative encounter (Gray, 2010) for the reader, proffering the author's initial meaning, a threshold into the intertextual process that produces the space. The ethnographer who uses photography is arguably more attuned to this process of intertextuality in their production of a combined "image-text" (Warren, 2002, p.238) that attempts to convey both the ordered, narrative impact of the written account and the affective, aesthetic impact of the photographs. The production of this image-paratext draws upon the same dialectical processes of conscious bodily engagement with others (e.g. subjects, readers/viewers, co-authors, peer reviewers), mediated by the materiality of the pen, the laptop and the camera (or camera-phone!) to produce an authored and authoritative artefact.

And what of the photographs themselves? Figures 1-4 above provide a neat visual mimetic that aligns well with our narrative of spatial text production. But not all the photographs taken in the field align so readily. For some, meaning is realised over time when we (and others) review them, reflect on them and discuss them. This realisation process reveals perhaps initially unconscious drives in the production of the paratext, akin to Kristeva's (1980) genotext.

Figure 5 below shows the village festival site from a canoe on the lake that it borders. It was originally intended to show the festival site from another angle, that of the lake which it borders, and on the shores of which the village sits. It was also an entirely opportunistic shot, taken on an idyllic summer afternoon during a break away from the festival. It illustrates the choice of site by the organizing group as not simply a space for organizing, but a symbolic space for everyone, they and their visitors to be close to the lake, potentially the most powerful inhabitant of the village. The relationship of the villagers with the lake is complex, encompassing the embodied, affective and even the political aspects of the space it produces. It is their source of leisure and pleasure, a representation of the vital resources of energy (through the hydro-electric station, 7 km upstream), basic necessities and food stocks (water,

fish and the annual moose hunt) and some sources of employment (from the historical practices of timber rafting and water-milling, to the more recent salmon farming). It has a personal meaning for the photographer intertwined with a cultural significance for village inhabitants which, contrary to Schmitt's (2011) conception of a non-authored text, indicates that this non-human participant is potentially a strong (perhaps even authorial) influence on intertextuality.



Figure 5 Festival site from the lake

Finally, in Figure 6 we see a perplexing image of spatial production incorporating the interaction of human and non-human, natural and technological in a strange ambiguous performance of summer stunt-riding on a snow-scooter. Exactly what does it mean? This was part of an event which dovetailed with the ending of the 2010, 2011 and 2012 festivals. It appears to indicate appropriation of the lake space for another form of symbolic celebration. It is at once both amusing and troubling, a possible disruption to the spatial text we have constructed. Both the photograph and the practice it momentarily captures, encapsulate the embodied nature of spatial production, but these two acts of spacing (Beyes and Steyaert, 2012) go beyond this. They encompass the material interactions of people and technologies, the emotional joys and physical struggles of the rider (how can I control this thing?) and the photographer (how can I get a clear image with this thing?), and the minor politics of space - is this the 'proper' place (Tuan, 1977) for this?



Figure 6 Is this the proper place (Tuan, 1977) for this?

Conclusions: Photography, spacing and intertextuality

In conclusion then, we return to the set of questions identified earlier in this paper, which have formed the main foci of our examination. First, what role do ethnographic photographs play in the consumption/production of a space-text? We argue that the temporal and spatial practices of organizing to which the festival study photographs contribute, are part of the creation of a symbolically communicative ‘text’, constructed by organizers in their meaning-making of ‘festival’. The practices of spatial production, we contend, inhere in organizing and are fundamentally intertextual in their open, dialogic and inter-discursive nature (Bakhtin, 1981). Intertextual space then is an ongoing process resulting from the spacing actions and interactions of a group of organizers. In simple terms, actors bring their own interpretation to their work, drawn from a range of pre-digested historical and spatially distributed texts of how organizational space is produced that contribute to the production of a new, collaboratively-organized, intertextual space. The contemporary organizational ethnographer, with her/his commitment to close involvement in the practices of organizing of which she/he are part, is part of the process of intertextual spacing. The photographic outputs of such an ethnography become an integral part of intertextual space, which raises specific questions about the relationship between text and non-text, and about organizational space as a research subject.

Second, to what extent is the photographic researcher a conscious authorial voice in the production of the space-text? We argue that the production of an ethnographic account of space, establishes a literally authored act of spacing by the ethnographer, which we see is an example of a paratext (Genette, 1997), or threshold text for the new reader. This poses an intriguing challenge for the ethnographer, as they become part of the dialectical dimension of space which Lefebvre (1991) implies in his characterization of space as simultaneously conceived, perceived and lived. The tension established is between a phenomenologically experienced spatial environment, dialogically developed practices of spacing, and an authored conception of space. The resolution we propose is one that posits photography as one strand of the intertextual 'weaving' which introduces you, the reader, to the embodied, affective and aesthetic (the semiotic) dimensions of spatial organizing. Engaging in the practices of photography also allows the researcher to reflect on the power relations which inhere in communicative action and to offer a more open-ended, dialogic contribution to the spatial text than in a written or spoken narrative.

Third, how might the the unconscious or unintended in spatial production be surfaced through photographic practice? Inspired by Barthes' (1977) thoughtful work on the reflective power of photography, we may pursue practices of photography – both the capture of our own photo-images and the interpretation of the images of related others – that offer a much richer, more complex, perhaps more elliptical evocation of our spatial production. In other words, we must seek to explore the sources of our intentions more deeply in a reflexive or auto-ethnographic examination of them. Massey's (2005) view of the unconscious production of space appears intertwined here with Benjamin's (1999) view that photography is related to psychoanalysis in surfacing the unconscious to suggest the role of the individual photograph as a genotext (Kristeva, 1980). Through this, we begin to identify "the social limits and structures of power that check those unconscious drives and their expressions in alternative discourses" (Gencarella, 2011, p.37), which we feel would bear more in-depth examination using methods of collaborative elicitation and auto-ethnographic reflection.

References

- Allen, G. (2000) *Intertextuality*. London: Routledge
- Anderson, B. and Harrison, P. (2010) 'The Promise of Non-Representational Theories', in B. Anderson and P. Harrison (eds) *Taking-Place: Non-Representational Theories and Geography*, pp. 1–35. London: Ashgate.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. (ed. Caryl Emerson, trans. Michael Holquist) Austin: University of Texas Press
- Barthes, R. (1977) *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*. Berkeley: University of California Press
- Barthes, R. (1982) *Camera Lucida*. London: Vintage
- Bateson, G. and Mead, M. (1942) *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis*. New York: Academy of Sciences
- Bauman, R. (2004) "Commentary: Indirect Indexicality, Identity, Performance: Dialogic Observations." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 15(1): 145-150
- Bell, E. and Davison, J.(2013) "Visual Management Studies: Empirical and Theoretical Approaches." *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(2):167-184
- Becker, H.S.(1974) Photography and Sociology, *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* 1(1) 3-26.
- Benjamin, W. (1999) "Little History of Photography" in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings vol.2 part 2 1931-4*. Translated by Livingstone, R. et al, ed. Jennings, M.W.et al. Cambridge MA:
- Beyes, T. & Steyaert, C. (2012) "Spacing organization: Non-representational theory and performing organizational space." *Organization* 19(1): 45-61

Cadman (2009) 'Non-Representational Theory/Non-Representational Geographies', in R. Kitchin and N. Thrift (eds) *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Vol. 7, pp. 456–63. London: Elsevier.

Clegg, S. R. & Kornberger, M. (2006) *Space, organizations and management theory*. Copenhagen: Liber & Copenhagen Business School Press

Clegg, S. R. & Kornberger, M. (2006) Organising space. In Stewart R. Clegg and Martin Kornberger (eds.) *Space, organizations and management theory*. Copenhagen: Liber & Copenhagen Business School Press, pp.143-162.

Cochoy, F. (2009) "Driving a shopping cart from STS to business, and the other way round: On the introduction of shopping carts in American grocery stores (1936—1959)." *Organization*, 16(1), pp. 31-55.

Dale, K. (2005) "Building a social materiality: Spatial and embodied politics in organization control." *Organization*, 12(5), pp. 649-678.

Dale, K. & Burrell, G. (2008) *The spaces of organisation & the organisation of space. Power, identity & materiality at work*. Basingstoke: Palgrave

de Certeau, M. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Decker, S. (2014) "Solid intentions: An archival ethnography of corporate architecture and organizational remembering." *Organization*, 21(4), pp. 514-542.

Deleuze and Guattari (1988) *A Thousand Plateaus*. London: Continuum

Dobers, P. & Strannegard, L. (2004) "The Cocoon - A traveling space." *Organization* 11(6): 825-848

Foucault, M. (1980) "What is an Author?" In *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structural Criticism* edited by Harari, J.V. 141-160. London: Methuen

- Foucault, M. (1997) "Self-writing". In *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 1* by Rabinow, P., 207-222. London: Penguin
- Gannon, S. (2006) "The (Im)Possibilities of Writing the Self-Writing: French Post-structural Theory and Auto-ethnography". *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies* 6(4): 474-495
- Gencarella, S.O. (2011) "Rooting for the Wolves: Critical Folklore Studies and the Psychoanalytic Wilderness". *Cultural Analysis* 11: 36-40
- Genette, G. (1997) *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Gray, J. (2010) *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers and Other Media Paratexts*. New York: New York University Press
- Gregson, N. & Rose, G. (2000) "Taking Butler elsewhere: Performativities, spatialities and subjectivities." *Environmental and Planning D: Society and Space* 18, pp.433-452
- Harper, D. (2003) "Framing photographic ethnography: a case study". *Ethnography* 4(2): 241-266
- Harper, D.(1994) "On the Authority of the Image: Visual Methods at the Crossroads",in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage,403-412.
- Knights, D. (2006) "Authority at work: Reflections and recollections." *Organization Studies*, 27(5), 699-720.
- Knox, H., O'Doherty, D., Vurdubakis, T. and Westrup, C. (2008) "Enacting airports: Space, movement and modes of ordering." *Organization* 15(6), pp. 869-888.
- Kristeva, J, (1980) *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lazar, S. (2015) “”This is not a parade, it’s a protest march”: Intertextuality, Citation and Political Action on the Streets of Bolivia and Argentina.” *American Anthropologist* 117(2): 242-256

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The production of space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Malden, MA: Blackwell

Lefebvre, H. (2009) “Space and the State” (from *De l’État*, first published 1978), in N. Brenner and S. Elden (eds) *Henri Lefebvre: State, Space World: Selected Essays*, trans. G. Moore, N. Brenner and S. Elden, pp. 223–53. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Lorimer (2005) ‘Cultural Geography: The Busyness of Being “More-Than-Representational”’, *Progress in Human Geography* 29(1): 83–94.

Massey, D. (1994) *Space, place and gender* Cambridge: Polity Press

Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*. London: Sage.

Munro, I. & Jordan, S. (2013) “‘Living Space’ at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe: Spatial tactics and the politics of smooth space.” *Human Relations* 66(11), pp.1497-1525

Pink, S. (2001) *Doing Visual Ethnography*. London: Sage

Pullen, A. & Rhodes, C. (2014) “Corporeal ethics and the politics of resistance in organizations.” *Organization*, 21(6), pp. 782-796.

Pinney, C. (2011) *Photography and Anthropology (Exposures)*. London: Reaktion

Ray, J.L. and Smith, A.D. (2012). “Using photographs to research organizations: evidence, considerations and application in a field study.” *Organizational Research Methods*, 15, pp. 288–315.

- Rose, G. (2012) *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*. London: Sage
- Schmitt, C. R. (2012) "If a text falls in the woods...: Intertextuality, environmental perception, and the non-authored text." *Cultural Analysis* 11, pp.17-44
- Sontag, S (1979) *On Photography*. Penguin
- Swan, E. (2010) "Commodity diversity: Smiling faces as a strategy of containment." *Organization*, 17(1), pp. 77-100.
- Thrift, N. (2007) *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect*. London: Routledge
- Tsoukas, H. and Chia, R. (2002). "On organizational becoming: rethinking organizational change". *Organization Science*, **13**, pp. 567–582.
- Tuan, Y-F. (1977) *Space and place. The perspective of experience*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press
- Tyler, M. & Cohen, L. (2010) "Spaces that matter: Gender performativity and organizational space." *Organization Studies* 31(2): 175-198
- Vigneron, F. (2010) "Hybridisation in the visual arts: now you see me, now you don't". *Visual Anthropology* 24(1-2): 30-45
- Wagner, J. (ed) (1979) *Images of Information*. London:Sage
- Warren, S.(2002). "Show me how it feels to work here: The role of photography in researching organizational aesthetics". *Ephemera: theory and politics in organization* 2/3:224-245. Available at www.ephemeraweb.org
- Yanow, D. (1998) "Space Stories: Studying museum buildings as organizational spaces while reflecting on interpretive methods and their narration". *Journal of Management Inquiry* 7(3): 215-239

Yanow, D. (2012) “Learning what it means to be ‘scientific’? Bodies, seeing and walking the museum line”. Keynote address, *Advancing Visual Methods in Business and Management Studies: InVisio Symposium*. 28-29th November 2012, University of Essex, Colchester, UK.